

**TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY  
BULLETIN**

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**William J. Griffin, Editor**  
**George Peabody College for Teachers**  
**Nashville, Tennessee**

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## MORE FOLKTALES FROM THE ITALIAN ALPS

Edited by

Leonard Roberts  
Union College  
Barbourville, Kentucky

Last year there appeared six stories in the Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin (XXII, pp. 99-108) from the Italian Alps. They were turned in to me by Rosa Silvine, of Wooldridge, Tennessee. She has been generous and concerned enough about folklore to write down four more, recalled from the tellings of her father.

Three of these are of wide tradition: "The Wicked Cobbler," generally known as the blacksmith who outwits the devil, is Type 330. It is found in most European collections and is in the Grandfather Tales by Richard Chase and elsewhere in America, though this is the first version I have collected. "The Three Giants Who Lost a Kingdom" seems to be more than Type 312, having an introduction to that story that I have not seen before. "The Mysterious Locket" is not in the Type Index as such, but it is of the Medieval Romance genre and perhaps can be traced. "The One-Eyed Giant" is Type 1137, found in Homer and the Arabian Nights. With three versions from the Kentucky mountains and now this one I seem to be the only collector of this tale among the American whites. It is a noble and a rare folktale but certainly has not been in oral circulation alongside of Homer all these centuries.

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### The Wicked Cobbler

Once upon a time in a far away village lived a cobbler and his wife. He was so cruel that she often made this remark to him: "You are so cruel that I wish the devil would come in person and get you."

As this story took place during the time that people believed the saints visited the earth in disguise to check on the people, Saint Peter visited Cassidi. In spite of the fact that old Cassidi was mean he always was kind and friendly to Saint Peter. One day Saint Peter decided to give Cassidi three wishes, hoping that Cassidi would wish for something that would make him a better man. Cassidi, however, wishes instead for some things that would help him to be cruel longer than he had hoped he would be.

Cassidi said, "First, I wish that anyone who picks up my hammer to put a few tacks in a shoe I have on my shoelast that every nail they drove would cause the nails in

their own shoes to stick their feet. Second, I wish whoever picks up my iron poker to stir up the fire would be unable to turn loose until I give permission for them to, and that the poker would get hot and more hot. Third, I wish whatever coin I put in my purse would remain there until I opened my coin purse. That would keep my wife from getting any change when I leave it lying around the house."

All went well until one day the devil sent one of his helpers to get old Cassidi. The helper was in a hurry but became interested in the shoes Cassidi was making for his wife. Cassidi pretended to be in a hurry too. He asked the devil's helper to hammer a few tacks in the shoe while he tended to some unfinished business.

The minute the helper started hammering the tacks his own shoe tacks began to stick in his feet. He couldn't stop hammering because old Cassidi wouldn't let him. He kept hammering until he decided to ask Cassidi to let him loose at any price. Cassidi asked for at least seven more years on earth. He was given this privilege by the devil's helper. In this village Cassidi was free to be his mean usual self again.

Time passed and the seven years were up, so the devil sent another helper to get Cassidi. The helper was warned about the tricks of the man. Cassidi told the helper that he was kindly glad to go with him for he had been cold all winter long.

The helper said, "Well, don't worry, you will soon be plenty hot. It stays that way where you are going."

"Well," old Cassidi said, "just how hot is it? Can you build me up a good fire and show me?"

"Sure," replied the helper, "I'll show you in a minute." He picked up the poker and began to stir up the fire. The poker got hot and hotter and the helper couldn't turn it loose nor quit stirring up the fire. After a couple of hours of this type of work he grew tired and promised to give Cassidi seven more years of freedom.

Time passed and old Cassidi enjoyed himself again for seven long years. The devil himself decided to come to Cassidi. He told the helpers in Chaos to have everything ready for he soon would bring someone back with him they had been expecting for some time.

The devil thought on the way up to Cassidi's house just what disguise he must take. He decided since Cassidi was such an unusually mean man, as well as clever, that he probably liked money. Since most of his men visitors had liked money too much on earth, the devil decided to change himself into a coin and place himself near the chair where Cassidi sat.

Cassidi noticed the shiny new coin the minute he sat down in his chair. He took his coin purse and flipped the coin in, and then quickly fastened it. The devil tried to get out but couldn't. Cassidi took the coin purse to his counter and laid it on his shoelast.

He hammered it and hammered it until the devil granted him seven more years on earth.

Finally old Cassidi died. First he went to Saint Peter's gate and asked for entrance into heaven. Saint Peter told him to take the quickest road to the other dwelling place. Cassidi took the slow road down hill. It was easy going. The path seemed full of adventure just as his life on earth had been. The things he shouldn't have done always seemed for him the easiest to do.

When he came to the devil's valley everything seemed to tempt him more and more. Finally he reached the door of the devil's main dwelling place and he knocked and knocked. The devil's helpers peeped out. When they saw who was there they bolted the door. Cassidi wasn't wanted in heaven nor in hell.

He just wanders about causing all the misfortunes that happen to cobblers, such as loosening tacks, mashing one's fingers, or making shoes that aren't mates. He is probably the cause of tacks working their way into shoes and hurting someone's feet.

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### Three Giants Who Lost a Kingdom

Once upon a time in a large valley lived three young giants. They were very happy since they more or less ruled the entire valley as well as the mountains, lakes, and the large castle located in a huge forest at the head of the valley. No one dared enter the narrow pass leading into their territory. A few had disappeared into the forest never to be seen again.

All three giants were more or less cruel at heart, but one, the eldest, was always scheming to get something away from the other two. He was to receive the privilege of ruling everything and his brothers would have to seek other homes or share with him. As he grew older he also grew in selfishness. He begrudged everything his two younger brothers ate, wore, or used. Finally he became so greedy he plotted how he might do away with his brothers. His youngest brother liked grapes so well he ate and even slept in the vineyard during grape season. The grapes were sprayed early in the spring, but the old giant sprayed one vine late in the summer and marked it.

The youngest giant ate grapes and ate grapes all during the season. Then one day he spied his favorite white grapes up on the top row of the vineyard. The grapes tasted bitter but he ate them anyway. He became very ill and died during the night. Everyone who knew him said that he had eaten too many grapes. But he had eaten the grapes from the marked vine. Next year the grapes were smaller, the next year even smaller until the vines were an entanglement of new runners, limbs and small bunches of grapes, as if some evil spirit possessed them. They were no longer tame but wild in every way just as if they were never taken care of.

The ruling giant began to make plans to rid himself of his other brother. His schemes all failed until he decided to place some poison mushrooms around an old tree



stump. He knew that his brother liked them and that he would also destroy any left in a ring, for they are called fairy rings and they neither one liked fairies.

After several attempts he finally succeeded in catching his brother in a hungry mood for mushrooms. He removed the poison ones from the tree stump and placed them with some good ones. In a week he had rid himself of his last brother and he was sole ruler of all the valley.

He began to get lonesome for his two brothers but he decided he would make the entrance to his valley pleasing so as to trap as many workers as he could. Some workers had to tend to the cattle, others the farm, and some worked in the castle. He would try out people for their honesty in various ways. One hunter was turned into a deer and all during the hunting season he ran for his life away from the hunters. One was turned into a rabbit because he so liked to hunt them. One young maiden who sometimes stole a piece of bread and butter because she was always hungry was turned into a huge black cat by the cook who was an old witch.

The cat's job was to guard the meathouse. Just beyond the meathouse was a doorway that led to an underground cave or dungeon of the castle. Within it were riches that any prince or king would envy, but no one went beyond the meathouse without being caught. Many a young dashing prince, hunter, and adventurer sought to enter this valley and overthrow the giant's kingdom. Some went so far as to be given the honest test but here is where they failed.

He would tell them to explore the castle, go where they pleased, but not to open the black door next to the pantry since this was only the meathouse. He always kept plenty of fresh meat there because he believed it made him strong and healthy. This one request always made everyone want to visit this room above all others. But they were always caught. Regardless of how careful anyone was who visited the meathouse, he always came out with blood on his shoes somewhere and the giant would know he had been there. The more they washed the blood spots the brighter they got. The black cat offered to lick those spots for some bread and butter but no one gave her any.

One day a kind shepherd boy looking for a lost sheep entered the forbidden valley. He was contented with his lot and so he wasn't looking for riches or the possibility of becoming a ruler. He looked innocent as he applied for work at the giant's home. The shepherd boy's job was to take out the ashes and carry water for the cook. The witch kept him busy and at night the tired boy slept behind the old stone stove. The old black cat would sometimes come and sleep nearby. Since he liked animals he rubbed the black cat's fur and talked to it. He noticed the cat's liking for bread and butter and so he decided to save her a piece of his every night.

Since he obeyed orders so well the old giant made him overseer of the kitchen servants. But this displeased the witch. She decided to get rid of the shepherd boy. She sent him to the meathouse for some meat to cook with some greens for the giant. He had been given some bread and butter for his dinner and this he had eaten, all but a small

piece. He entered the meathouse and the huge black cat offered to lick any blood off his shoes for a piece of bread and butter. This he gladly gave the cat.

The witch that night told the giant that the shepherd boy had been in the meathouse, so the giant became angry and examined Tony's shoes but he found no blood on them. This the witch could not understand. The ones who entered the meathouse always came out with blood on their shoes, slippers, or boots. The witch would have liked to destroy the giant herself and get the riches but she couldn't cast any spell on him. He was just as evil as she was.

A week passed and the witch decided to send the shepherd boy Tony back to the meathouse. This time she decided to fasten the door after he stepped inside. Then when the giant came Tony would be caught in the act. Tony tried to come out after he had got what the witch wanted out of the meat room, but he was fastened in. The cat sensed Tony's predicament and she advised him to hide in the hanging closet. This room was the size of a clothes closet and it contained a hanging noose. The floor to this room was a removable trap door. A person could stand on the opposite side for a while with the trap door up, but not for long. The giant wouldn't look there for him and if the witch did it would be too bad for her.

Tony entered the hanging closet and removed the trap door. At times he thought he would have to put the trap door down and be caught, but he kept holding onto the door. That night the giant and the witch came to the meat room to look for Tony. The giant went straight to the door that led to his treasure room. The witch looked here and there but she didn't find Tony. She decided to take a look into the hanging room to make sure everything was in order, for she knew as soon as Tony came out from where he was hiding he would be hanged or turned into some hunted animal. She wanted him to be hanged.

The witch opened the door and stepped in. Down she went to the rushing waters of the underground canal which joined a lake nearby. Tony put the trap door down and came out. He fastened and bolted the door to the treasure room. He and the cat, now no longer under the spell of the witch, returned to the kitchen to finish dinner.

The giant decided while in his treasure room to sample some old wine. He sampled too much and became drunk. He fell asleep and slept for two or three days. When he came to he began to realize why he was there. He started looking for Tony but he could not find him and when he went to the door he found it bolted. He began hurling wine casks at the door and then he gave a heavy push and the door flew open.

He started for the kitchen hungry as a bear and angry as a lion. The maid who had helped with the kitchen work had prepared him a wonderful meal and left it on the table. The meal was hot and contained his favorite foods, ham, hot bread, butter, and honey. She had prepared it after she heard him fussing at the door. When he saw this meal he began to devour it like a pig. This meal put him in a better spirit, but not for long, for his honey contained the same powder he used in his grapevine spraying.

In a week the valley was green and beautiful, the trees were full of singing birds, the woods were full of animals and hunters. The castle too began to get a going over. The maiden who had been in love with the kind shepherd boy ever since she first saw him decided to win him or know the reason why. This she did without any trouble since the shepherd boy felt the same way about her.

To the great wedding feast came many from far and near. The bride, however, looked for only one person among the crowd, her father with whom she was hunting the day they were trapped in the valley. She often wondered what had become of him. In the distance she saw someone coming with crutches--her father had been turned into a timber wolf. He had lost a foot in a trap and had lost an eye in a fight with another wolf.

The wedding feast lasted a week. Many gifts were received by the couple, including a scroll with the names of all who resided in the valley and proclaiming the girl and the good shepherd sole rulers of the entire valley. Their titles were King Anthony and Queen Jessica. They lived happy with a family of their own and with many happy subjects for the rest of their natural lives.

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#### The Mysterious Locket

Once upon a time in a tiny village at the foot of the Alps lived a poor villager with his wife and small daughter. They were poor but happy. The small girl lived too far from school to attend regular classes but she was taught at home. Her mother spent the long winter evenings teaching her daughter to read, sew, and make baskets. The father spent the early dark evenings making fishing nets.

In the spring the peasants of the small communities nearby paid some young men to take their goats and cows to the mountain pastures. Some among the young shepherds would take a younger brother or two with them. A family or two would also move to the mountains to tend to the milk and see to it that the cheese were made and aged just right. These families and little boys lived in temporary shelters with the exception of the cheese maker who lived in a room made of stone. This room was large enough for everyone to gather for songs, games, or church at night when the day's work was done. The rooms in which the cheese were made and aged were small and made to extend into a hillside in the fashion of a cellar.

Little Madeline looked forward to late spring when company came to the Alpine pastures. Of all who came Madeline liked Deno the best. He always brought her some chocolate candy and he didn't eat most of it before he came to her house like the others did. He always brought her a package from his sister Lena, who did up her clothes that she had outgrown and sent them to Madeline.

Year after year the summers went by too fast and the winters dragged by too slowly. Her father told wonderful stories about the adventures he experienced in his escape journey from Turkey through war traps and enemy territory. He would tell



Madeline and his wife that some day they would go back to Turkey and inherit their family's wealth.

Ten years passed but they were no closer to his family's wealth than they had ever been. He always carried on a tiny chain around his ankle a golden locket supposed to have been his grandmother's. Madeline asked for it but she was told that it must always remain on him until he returned to his homeland, that it was his passport.

One bitter cold day Madeline's father failed to return with the sheep. The flock came home led by the leader, Chicko. It was too cold and dark to search the woods for him that night. The next day the sheep were left at home. Madeline's mother ventured before daybreak to the nearest house down in the village to spread the sad news. Many friends came to search but no trace of the shepherd who had disappeared could be found.

Madeline and her mother moved to a small town where Madeline went to school and her mother did house work for a wealthy wine merchant and his family. Madeline longed to go to their mountain home, especially in the spring, but her mother always told her she didn't have the money to take her. Their home was practically torn apart after they left it and strangers would ask Madeline about her father's jewelry, to which she always replied, "Papa had no jewelry." She didn't consider the locket jewelry and so she always answered no. The family for whom her mother worked promised Madeline a trip to the mountains just as soon as their son and his family came to visit them. It would be a good trip for all of them to take.

Madeline was finally in a landau drawn by six horses and on her way to the mountain village. The trip to the mountain home was very disappointing to all but the children. Madeline saw Deno and he was now a handsome young shepherd who planned someday to be a great musician. He sang and played a mountain flute or was dancing some new step he had made up when the day's work was done. Madeline had inherited her father's fairness, blond hair, and pale blue eyes, more like the Greeks than the Turkish. Deno was of a dark complexion. The children went far up the mountain and picked many wild flowers. Deno made Madeline and her girl friend a daisy chain to wear around their necks. Deno wandered far out on ledges that were dangerous, or to the edge of ice crevices without fear.

The next summer was Deno's last to wander up in the woods because he had reached the age to enter the army for three years. He had been secretly looking for any trace of Madeline's father. One day while far out on a rocky ledge he noticed in a deep ravine a bed of scarlet flowers, a sort of wild poppy flower. He couldn't get down to them that day, but on the next day he had a pick and stout rope. He tied the rope to a large pine and descended to a lower ledge where he could climb down from rock to rock and reach the flower bed. Once down to this strange bed of flowers he discovered a cabin under shelter. In this cabin he found a few household materials, all home-made. Some digging tools were found of a different kind than any he had ever seen. He walked around and found the frayed end of a rope that had been cut in two by the sharp rocks. Someone had descended on a rope but because of ice or some other mishap had fallen when the rope's



fibers had been cut by the rocks. The bones lay in a heap below.

He searched farther and found at least three more skeletons and evidence of a struggle. Their knives, usually carried for protection, were rusty and lying around opened. A rusty old ring lay in the corner of the rocky ledge above the fireplace. He recognized the ring as one that was worn by Madeline's father. He also located a hand but none of the skeletons he found had a hand missing. He looked the cabin over and looked out at the beginning of a small brook from the melting ice. He looked and looked but found no other skeleton and decided to pick some flowers and return home. He stepped over into the flower bed a way and his foot sank deep. He tried the opposite corner and the same thing happened. He would just dig one or two flowers and plant them down in the valley to start new flowers. The more he looked at the flowers the more they reminded him of something he couldn't describe. He dug at the roots of one large cluster of flowers just at the end of the long bed. As he dug them up it suddenly dawned on him that the flower bed was in the shape of a grave. He dug and dug until he came to some bones. Dark came on and he slept there and resumed digging early the next morning. Around nine o'clock he uncovered the skeleton with the missing hand and it was Madeline's father's skeleton, for the locket was still on the chain around his ankle. He removed the locket, which resembled a round watch or disk. He was brushing it when the inside of the locket came out leaving a thin outer shell. Inside the locket were tiny crosses, or X's, fourteen in the second circle, one lonely cross in the center, and the outer circle, which was a little soiled, contained twenty-one crosses.

The next day he told his adventures to no one. The more he thought about the locket the more he felt drawn to it and he wanted to keep it. Maybe after his army term he would tell Madeline all about his experience in the ledge cabin up in the Alps. She would be older and would understand it better in three years.

In the service he traveled to other small villages and cities. He saw Madeline only once during his stay in the army and met other girls, one or two that he liked as well as Madeline. After he left the army he decided to travel. He applied for a job with Madeline's mother's boss. As a worker on the wine merchant's vessels he went to Spain and Portugal, Greece, Persia, and also Turkey. And he always went out into the villages when he had a chance to travel from port. He remained in Turkey for seven months. In the vineyards he learned from the older men that many an old estate was being ruled by men who could get the most soldiers to fight for them. One old castle and all the village around it was stolen from an aged ruler. All of his family were supposed to have been killed along with the faithful servants.

He learned from an old gardener who lived nearby that a son was supposed to have escaped by hiding in a wine cask that was being returned to another country. The gardener told him that many men had lost their lives searching for the secret map to their treasure, as well as for the rightful emblem belonging to the family who should and would rule this estate.

Deno traveled and saw the world as far as traveling at this time permitted. He received less and less news about Madeline and for a period of about three years which

he spent in an India port checking exports for a company he had heard nothing. Time passed quickly because Deno had a good time. He finally began to wonder about home. He would go back and give Madeline the locket and help her to recover some of her father's wealth or his estate. He was beginning to long for a home of his own, as well as to see his friends and relatives.

He left one spring morning with a crew in the most expensive vessel. They met only with rough weather and storms until they found themselves nearing a group of unknown islands. They bribed the natives with wine and spices for food as well as pearls. The natives looked upon them as gods since their weapons were the best they had seen and the travelers knew how to use them. One old sea-going member played all sorts of tricks on the native and this made him a sort of leader among them. After a time they prepared to leave, but several accidents occurred which made Deno suspicious of the sea captain. Deno believed the captain knew something about the locket for he had asked questions about it.

Deno and his few faithful members left unexpectedly for home. Home was far away and with only second best steering they drifted farther away from home. Some several years passed before the ragged hungry crew reached an island on a route of passing vessels. Their owners' sons, who were in charge of these merchant vessels, sent gladly for them thinking that their stories would provide entertainment for years to come.

The first person Deno began to look for after landing and cleaning himself up to look like a respectable citizen was Madeline's mother. The servants were reluctant to tell him anything but finally an old gardener told him what had happened. Madeline had married a young farmer she met at a church program in town. Her mother had gone to visit them when a contagious disease broke out in the village. Madeline, her husband, and mother were all gone, but their nine or ten-year-old son and a little daughter were in some orphanage.

Deno left again for Turkey. This time he applied for a job as keeper of the gardens at the "Coastal Chana" estate. He looked it over carefully; he noticed that the flower plots were surrounded with rocks. The center circles reminded him of a wheel. He counted all the rocks and they corresponded to the X's in the locket. He weeded the beds and examined the rocks but found nothing unusual. In the center stood an old bird bath or fountain, long ago out of use. In draining the fountain base he discovered a large square hole of water. After removing the water he found a tiny opening at the top just below the ground. He removed some stones and found a passage-way to the castle cellar. He worked on the fountain for a couple of weeks, until he had the information he needed.

He returned to Europe and to the mountain orphanage where he hoped to locate Madeline's children. He had to pretend to be their grandfather in order to get them. He left for an island near the country in which a home of their own awaited them and left the children in the care of a school master and his wife while he made the necessary journey to reclaim their property. When the new owner asked for evidence he produced

all kinds of papers, emblems, and the locket to prove he was the long lost son and he demanded his rightful estate. Since the law permitted no fighting for land at this time due to the fact that many rulers were Christians, he was given the keys to his home. Thus he passed as the children's grandfather and they swore to it because they didn't know their mother's father and they were willing to stand by Deno.

In later years when both were married, Denena to a prosperous farmer and little Christopher to a beautiful woman, and in charge of the estate, Deno would sit by the open fireplace and tell them true stories of his adventures, which they all enjoyed. He often would fall melancholy and would sing songs of his lost lover. Little did the children know that it was their mother of whom he sang. Of course it was his fault for not returning home sooner, or staying at home. He was repaying them what their mother should have had.

Denena kept the jewels found in the castle and some of the gold. She was as happy as any princess and lived as a queen in her village. Christopher carried on the old tradition of the family by marrying someone who not only owned as much as he but knew how to live and rule such a place.

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### The One-Eyed Giant

Each country I guess likes to make believe that the one-eyed giant lived some where in one of its hidden caves on some lofty mountain. This giant lived in a cave in a mountain that is covered with ice three-fourths of the year and contains an icecap on its peak the year round. He lived all alone in the Alps high above a path known as Pass de Gial. He owned some goats which furnished him with milk, cheese and meat, also skins for shoes and clothing. He, like all other giants, was supposed to raid the village gardens, vineyards, and orchards and no one dared stop him.

One cold blustery winter morning a boy wandered into the cave to shield himself from the wind for just a moment. He hears the earth shake; it is the giant coming out of the cave with his goats. The boy was so frightened he leans against the wall as close as he can. The giant thunders out of the cave and then suddenly turns around and begins to look in all directions. He spies little Gildo, who runs far into the cave.

The giant laughs as he continues to drive the goats out to pasture. After the last one is out he pushes a heavy stone slab over the entrance. He continues to tend his goats until evening and then he returns to his cave. He prepares himself a fine meal and decides that in a couple of days he will have a different kind of meat, as soon as he can fatten little Gildo and put some meat on his bones and tight-drawn skin.

Gildo finds the food on a rock left for him by the giant. He eats it a little at a time, afraid it might be poisoned. He feeds the rats a little of his food. He looks for a way to escape but the giant is lying half way across the path and the entrance is barred for the night. Gildo explores the cave and plots on a way to get out. He has made



friends with all the creatures in the cave, from the least to the biggest ones. One old rodent is very poor; the giant wouldn't even let him have a crumb when he could help it and he often tried to kill it. This cave rat would rub his nose against the giant's feet and tickle him until he would go into a rage.

The giant decided he would have goat meat for his meal one night, so he picked one old goat out and prepared him for his supper. He ate enough for a dozen men. He left Gildo a plate full but he would not touch a bite of it; he fed it to his pets. The old rodent, whom Gildo called Gobo because it had a hump on its back, would do all kinds of tricks for him. Gildo spied a huge dagger up on a side wall in one of the inner rooms inside the cave. He couldn't reach it so he thought and thought how he might get that dagger. He gathered some clay, put some cheese in the clay, and threw it at the dagger. Some of his cheese and clay stuck all around the dagger and on it. The old rat, Gobo, decided to have fun too so he went after the cheese in the clay. As he landed on the dagger down it came. The sound awoke the giant. He yells out, "What happened there!"

"I dropped my plate," replies Gildo. The giant resumes his snoring. His hot drink is still brewing in its pot. Gildo creeps up slowly to the giant. With one quick stroke of the dagger he cuts the chain around the giant's neck. The key he carries around it flies past Gildo. Gildo lays the dagger on the hot coals to use later, but the giant, though a sound sleeper, awakens. Gildo pours all the boiling drink in the giant's one eye.

The giant roars and rises to pursue Gildo. He feels his way along the wall of the cave. Gildo with the key runs off to the far corner of the cave. He puts the skin of a dead goat on and huddles close to a few stray goats in the interior of the cave. The giant's pains are unbearable but he must reach the room where he has his keg of gold. He pushes all rocks away until he finally reaches the treasure room and finds it locked. He runs to the entrance to keep Gildo from escaping.

When morning comes Gildo shambles out when the other goats are called and is counted as a goat. He carries the old rodent along in the dead goat's skin. When the giant discovers he has an extra goat he races to the entrance. He feels of the goats again. When Gildo comes along the old rodent takes a nip on the giant's finger and he yells and chases the goat out of the entrance.

He was blind when he removed the stone slab that morning and so he didn't do a good job; he only partly moved the stone. In running out of the cave he hit the stone so hard he knocked it over. And as the stone went over the threshold and down the valley the old giant was right with it. He landed first and the large stone flattened him out at the foot of the steep ridge.

Gildo returned to the cave in a few days with his father and a few other men. He knew how to open the door to the treasure room, but when he did they found only a deep round well. In the midst of it they saw a huge keg but could not reach it. Gildo finally located another narrow hole which led down by steps to the water's edge. He found that the keg was fastened to a rope which he pulled and brought the keg ashore. When it



was opened it contained only the jewelry the giant had stolen in the village.

Gildo rid the valley of the giant, and the dagger he owned would cut into metal, wood, or flesh as quick as lightning. This brought him good luck for he was feared at home and away. The chain and key were gold and sold for a considerable sum of money. The stories he told about the one-eyed giant made him welcome in any court. He never had to wander any more nor was he ever cold again in a cave or in need of food.

He was known far and near as a giant killer, when really the giant killed himself.

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# "FOOR WAYFARING STRANGER": A NOTE

BY

Thomas J. Rountree  
Newcomb College, Tulane University  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Although one cannot deny the dominant religious element in many versions of the song "Poor Warfaring Stranger,"<sup>1</sup> the possibility of secular derivation should not be hastily precluded--especially in the central motif of the stranger himself.

Usually the religious coloring is given primary--if not exclusive--consideration. Herbert Haufrecht, for example, says:

Many of the white spirituals were born at Baptist and Methodist camp meetings /in America/. These were held in the woods where choral singing was one of the features of the ritual. Based on the choral traditions of Billings and other American hymn composers, as well as old world psalms, a new song took root--the white spiritual. One of the most beautiful and widely known of these is "The Wayfarin' Stranger."<sup>2</sup>

Harvey H. Fuson's discussion<sup>3</sup> of the environmental influences on the songs of Kentucky mountain folk supports Haufrecht's view. So do the contents of various versions

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1. See versions in Americans and Their Songs, ed. Frank Luther (New York, 1942); Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands, ed. Harvey H. Fuson (London, 1931); Burl Ives, "The Wayfarin' Stranger": A Collection of 21 Folk Songs and Ballads, ed. Herbert Haufrecht (New York, 1945); Our Singing Country: A Second Volume of American Ballads and Folk Songs, ed. John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax (New York, 1941).

2. Ives, p. 46.

3. Introduction to Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands, pp. 35-36.

of the song. The chorus usually concludes that the stranger is going over the river Jordan, the historical Palestine river that has become a religious symbol to the Christian world. He is going there to see someone--his mother, father, brother, sister, classmates, "my Savior. Having thoroughly considered this world of woe, sickness, toil, danger, and trouble, he finds promise of surcease in the "bright world" to which he is going. From the Bible he has found definite, acceptable proof of the future, and in the version "I'm Just A-going Over Jordan" he ends his song confidently:

I feel my sins are all forgiven;  
My hopes are placed on things above;  
I'm going there to see my Saviour,  
He said He'd take me when I come.  
I'm just a-going over Jordan,  
I'm just a-going over home.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly the religious content involving the wayfaring stranger in many versions of the song cannot be doubted.

Yet, evidence indicates that the "Wayfaring Stranger," as a folk song figure and as a song, may have had some derivation other than religious. George Fullen Jackson<sup>5</sup> states that the tune of the song is quite evidently borrowed from secular environment. He adds that text passages in the secular ballads, "In Old Virginny" and "Awake, Awake," bring to mind similar ones in the "Poor Wayfaring Stranger." In "Awake, Awake" the stranger appears as "your true love" who "is going away." Frank Luther<sup>6</sup> records these two stanzas of a version which shows no definite religious coloring until the chorus is sung:

I'm just a poor and lonesome traveler  
A-goin' through this world of woe;  
A-creakin' on to debt and worry,  
The only place that I can go.

My father lived and died a farmer,  
A-reapin' less than he did sow;  
And now I follow in his footsteps,  
A-knowin' less than he did know.

So far as I can determine, no one has pointed out another use of the wayfaring stranger motif in a very definite secular context. In the Negro work song "De Boll Weevil," which Burl Ives sings, the song spinner, it develops, is the wayfaring stranger:

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

5. *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America*, (New York, 1937).

6. *Americans and Their Songs*, p. 46.

7. In the recording, "Historical America in Songs," Album VI, Encyclopedia Britannica Films, Inc.

Now if anybody happens to ask you  
 Who was it sung this song,  
 Tell 'em the wayfaring stranger  
 He's just been here and gone.

This in juxtaposition with the refrain, "Just looking for a home!" etc., and in consideration of what has preceded in the song, places the stranger in a humorous light. Although the boll weevil came to the United States from Mexico only about the turn of the century, the stranger motif in the song may indicate an earlier use of it in secular songs. Otherwise it would here appear almost sacrilegious, an unlikely possibility for the folkway seriousness indicated by Fuson and Haufrecht.

The origin of the song "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" cannot be dated nor placed with specific geography. Haufrecht records that "After being passed on orally at camp meetings, it was first printed in the 'Kentucky Harmony' in the early 1800's."<sup>8</sup> He also says that Burl Ives, who uses the song as his theme song, tells of receiving a letter from a woman in Salt Lake City. She wrote that one hour before his execution, Joseph Smith, one of the founders of the Mormon sect, requested the singing of his favorite psalm, "The Wayfarin' Stranger." But none of this suggests the origin of the song or the wayfaring stranger motif. Neither do the varying titles--"Poor Wayfaring Stranger," "The Wayfaring Stranger," "Over Jordan," "I'm Just A-going Over Jordan."

Thus, though the wayfaring stranger motif is evidently found largely in songs of religious coloring, it is equally evident that its evolution could have come through secular media. The secular could have encroached upon the religious, or vice versa. But lack of external evidence of origin should not preclude the evidence of secular derivation of the motif.

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8. Ives, p. 46.

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## FROM FANCY TO FACT IN DULCIMER DISCOVERIES\*

By

Vernon H. Taylor  
George Peabody College for Teachers

The instrument I speak about is one which many of us have come to call the plucked dulcimer. Now, all dulcimers can be plucked, even those that are usually played with hammers or mallets. I here refer to that type of dulcimer which qualifies best under the performance direction of, "For plucking only," whether this plucking be done by the fingers directly or by the use of an especially designed piece of material held by the fingers but used as a plectrum or "pick."

To state the case negatively is to say that the hammer dulcimer which has been found in use in Turkey, Korea, and many other parts of the world, as well as in most parts of the U.S.A. where folk music is a functioning heritage is neither the subject nor the object of my remarks.

The late Charles F. Bryan and his wife toured Europe in the summer of 1954, viewing as they traveled a number of collections of musical instruments which they hoped might shed light on the origin of the dulcimer. That same fall Mr. Bryan delivered a short report at the annual convention of the Tennessee Folklore Society, entitled "The Dulcimer Enigma." He stated that not one of the instrument collections which he viewed in Europe contained an instrument which could possibly be of help in his quest for the dulcimer's origin. Beyond this observation he did suggest one remaining ray of hope. It had come to his attention upon his return to America that in the Scandinavian countries, an area which Mr. Bryan did not include in his tour, Mrs. Georg Bidstrup of the John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, North Carolina, had seen an instrument with marked dulcimer similarities in the vicinity of the Voss Folk School, Voss, Norway, when she visited there in 1923. The instrument which she saw was called a langeleg. Its elongated, pear-shaped body, together with its system of fretted and drone strings, immediately called to mind some of the older dulcimers which we find in the Appalachian Highlands.

When the Council of Southern Mountain Societies met in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, in February, 1957, I interviewed Mrs. Bidstrup. A few weeks later I received from her two pictures which are best explained by the letter which accompanied them:

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\*This is an abbreviated version of a paper read at the annual meeting of the Tennessee Folklore Society in Clarksville, November 2, 1957.



Dear Dr. Taylor:

The day following our talk at Gatlinburg I tried to find you but learned you left right after breakfast. I wanted you to meet Solvejg Bording from Denmark. She has seen a Langeleg in her home in Jutland. It belonged to a Norwegian, a guest in her home. She has never seen a Langeleg in Denmark.

I am enclosing two films of the man in Norway, about whom I told you. Unfortunately the one taken in the home where he has his homemade fiddle under his arm is better than the one outside, showing the Langeleg. The only prints I have are dull, so I thought you would rather have the films. I would appreciate having them back.

These are some of the facts I gleaned from my notes. Together with a teacher, Fraken Hjelle, from the Voss Folk School, we walked over the ice to the end of the lake to visit a handworkers' school for boys where furniture and ironwork were taught. The old man played old Norsk tunes for us.

If you want to do a bit of research, I suggest you write to the director of the Handworkers' School, Voss, Norway, and tell him that in 1923 two American women visited his school during their stay at Voss Folk School, and while there they heard a man play his homemade fiddle and the Langeleg. Perhaps he can give you some helpful leads.

Sincerely,

/s/ Marguerite Bidstrup  
John C. Campbell Folk School  
Brasstown, North Carolina

March 2, 1957

The picture of the langeleg which Mrs. Bidstrup enclosed revealed an instrument with eight strings. The frets appear to cross the finger board beneath the strings nearest the player's right hand as the instrument is held. This would place frets under the four upper strings. The remaining four strings are unfretted and probably functioned as drones according to the wishes of the player. This method of stringing corresponds in a general way to the string arrangement of the bass lute which has a set of four drone strings and six fretted strings which the player may use according to the specialized tuning required by the composition which he is performing.

A number of things now pointed in the direction of the Scandinavian countries as the logical place for our next bit of research. Through the correspondence of John F. Putnam, author of the recent booklet, The Plucked Dulcimer of the Southern Mountains,

we have acquired more specific information which supplies a degree of time depth that may well go far beyond that of any other piece of information coming into our possession thus far. Reidar Sevag, curator of the Norse Folkemuseum, Oslo, Norway, replied to Mr. Putnam's request for dulcimer information in a letter of August 5, 1957, that describes the instrument he calls the langeleik.

Norsk Folkemuseum  
Oslo  
den 5/8, 1957

Mr. John F. Putnam  
Box 252  
Boon, North Carolina

I have just returned home and am going to leave for ten days again this afternoon. Therefore, only a few words in reply to your letter about the langeleik,

Form: The form can vary a little, but most langeleiks have a rectangular shape, long and narrow....

The body often has been decorated by painting or by carving: for instance, by carved upright standing animal heads at the ends.

Strings: The instrument always has one melody string and a series of accompanying strings, mostly seven, but not always so many on old instruments.

Way of Playing: The right hand plucks all the strings with a plectrum generally in a clear rhythmical way, whereas the melody is formed at the melody string by means of the three middle fingers of the left hand. For this purpose, the board underneath the string is supplied with frets down to which the string is pressed by the fingers.

History: We do not know the origin of our instrument but can trace it back to about 1600. A good deal of years ago a Norwegian, Mr. Erik Eggen, wrote a study of this instrument called "Skafasteudies," ("Studies of Scales"). The book is out of sale now but can certainly be borrowed from our central library, "Universitets Biblioteket," Oslo. It deals especially with the types of scales typical to the langeleiks so as they can be found by analyzing the positions of the frets on the fingerboards of the old instruments. As a result of his studies, Mr. Eggen, as far as I remember, puts forth the theory that the langeleik may have one of its roots in the classical Greek instrument, Smbuka.

I am sorry that I cannot point to any publication on this instrument written in English, but I shall gladly try and answer any further questions from you in the matter and also find some pictures if you want me to.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Reidar Sevag  
Curator

In point of time, two comments in Reidar Sevag's letter to Mr. Putnam aroused our interest: first, the statement, "We do not know the origin of the instrument but can trace it back to about 1600" and, secondly, Mr. Eggen's comment that the langeleik may have one of its roots in a classical Greek instrument, the sambuka.

Between the year 1600 and the Golden Age of Perikles lie the Middle Ages. Wilhelm Stauder's Little Book of Musical Instruments, has this to say about the scheitholt, an instrument very similar in appearance to the langeleik of the North Countries.

Scheitholt. In the Middle Ages the scheitholt (scheitholz) was already known as the oldest instrument of the zither type instruments. It consisted of a narrow but long wooden box (often without bottom) over which a number of strings were stretched just as they are on the psaltery. Most of these strings could not be shortened. Some melody strings (No. 1 to No. 4), however, ran over a fretted fingerboard. The instrument was played without a plectrum. Yet the strings were not shortened with the fingers but with a small wooden stick. The scheitholz was still played in the Nineteenth Century, though infrequently.

This book may be obtained in the Staatliche Akademie der Tonkunst, München, Germany.

Curt Sachs, author of Our Musical Heritage, tells us that "The conservative Spartans were alarmed when, around 400 B. C., the then modern musician, Timotheos of Miletos, performed with four additional strings on his lyre and the court ordered them to be smitten off"--lest the morals of the country be corrupted by such practices. This judiciary act was in keeping with the Greek doctrine of Ethos which proposes that a system of tones related to a particular starting pitch has both physiological and psychological effect upon the listener. The persistence of full fretted and partially fretted plectrum instruments in all ages suggests that experiments such as those attempted by Timotheos might have been conducted with less hazard by people living outside Sparta, as well as perhaps the whole of Greece. An idea born in Greece might, therefore, have been nurtured better outside the land of its origin. With this thought in mind, the scheitholz of the Middle Ages may guide us in bridging the gap between the langeleik and the

classical Greek sambuka.

While we cannot reasonably hope to identify our present instrument with either the Harp of David or the Lyre of Orpheus, I believe that collectively we are making progress in establishing the identity of the plucked dulcimer more definitely with those heritages of the past which are known to us at least in part.

Your continued interest and reporting on this matter can well result in a much more authoritative and detailed study which will contribute real stature to the folk expressions wherever they may be found in our own country and help to separate them from the many counterfeit varieties of music which have already flourished too long under the banner of folk art.

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#### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

The twenty-third annual meeting of the Tennessee Folklore Society was held at Austin Peay State College, Clarksville on November 2, 1957. Illness curtailed the intended program and a variety of causes limited the attendance, but the day was, as usual, declared by those present to have been both profitable and enjoyable. The program was as follows:

##### Morning Session

- 10:00 - Welcome ..... President Halbert Harvill,  
Austin Peay State College  
10:20 - Folk Songs with Dulcimer ..... Miss Jane Brock ("Miss Ken-  
tucky, 1957")  
10:40 - Songs ..... Austin Peay Chorus  
11:10 - "From Fancy to Fact in Dulcimer  
Discoveries" ..... Vernon H. Taylor

##### Afternoon Session

- 1:30 - Presentation of a Collection of Folk  
Instruments ..... Vernon H. Taylor  
2:10 - Tennessee Folk Songs on Tape ..... George W. Boswell  
2:30 - Songs ..... Austin Peay Men's Glee Club  
2:45 - "A Real Ghost Story" ..... Mrs. Asthore Reynolds



3:15 - "Scottish Folk Songs" ..... Herschel Gower

3:50 - Business Meeting

4:30 - Tea for members and guests, offered by Austin Peay State College.

At the business meeting the Society was presented with reports by the Secretary that were less encouraging than usual. The membership and subscription list were described as having been reduced in the past year by about 25 per cent as compared with 1956. The Treasurer's report (in Mr. Bass's absence, also read by the Secretary) indicated that the financial status of the Society has not changed appreciably since November, 1956.

A motion made by Mr. Griffin and unanimously adopted by the membership present provides that beginning in the fall of 1958, single annual membership and subscription rates will be raised to \$2.00, while memberships and subscriptions for two or more years will be offered at the old rate of \$1.50 per year. The purpose of the new plan was described as that of encouraging long-term affiliations and thus reducing expenditures of time, energy, and money in solicitation of renewals.

The following officers were elected for 1958:

President, George C. Grise, Austin Peay State College  
 Vice-president, Mildred Hatcher, Austin Peay State College  
 Treasurer, William W. Bass, Carson-Newman College  
 Secretary-Editor, William J. Griffin, George Peabody College for Teachers

The Society formally expressed its appreciation of the work done by Dr. George Grise in preparing the program of the day, the generosity of all those who contributed to the program, and the hospitality of the officials and faculty members of Austin Peay State College who cooperated to make our meeting a pleasant experience. It also expressed regret that so many members had been prevented from sharing that experience.

The annual meeting in 1958 was scheduled to be held at George Peabody College for Teachers.

## EVENTS AND COMMENTS

RICHARD D. DORSON has been appointed Professor of History and Folklore and chairman of the Folklore Committee at Indiana University, effective September 1957, to succeed Stith Thompson, who retired in 1955 as Distinguished Service Professor of English and Folklore.

Dr. Thompson continues his folklore studies at Indiana University as Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, having just returned from a year's research in European archives on a Guggenheim fellowship.

Dorson comes to Indiana University from Michigan State University, whose faculty he joined in 1944 after taking his doctorate at Harvard. He spent the past year in Japan as Fulbright Lecturer in American Studies at the University of Tokyo.

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THE DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS announces the publication this month of the fourth volume representing the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore. The volume is edited by Jan Philip Schinhan, and is entitled The Music of the Ballads. It is priced at \$7.50.

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GWERIN, A NEW "Journal of Folklife," published by Basil Blackwell, 49, Broad Street, Oxford, England, is commended to the attention of readers of the Bulletin by Professor Gary S. Dunbar of the University of Virginia. Issued twice a year, Gwerin is described as a popular but authoritative journal dealing with all aspects of folk life in Great Britain and Ireland and their relations with the Continent and Scandinavia. The subscription price is 15 shillings (about \$2.15), and it comes to the United States post free. Two numbers have already been published.

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AMERICAN INDIAN ritual and folk tales are recorded in three articles in Midwest Folklore, VII, 1. The reports are prefaced by a careful reconsideration of Longfellow's treatment of the Indian in Hiawatha. Rose M. Davis, who presents this new analysis of Longfellow's Indianism, concludes that the poet truthfully portrayed the external facts of Indian life but did not attempt to achieve a psychological understanding of the people he wrote about.

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THE KENTUCKY FOLKLORE RECORD for July-September, 1957, is given over to a collection of "Folksongs of Kentucky, East and West," edited by D. K. Wilgus. The selections are varied and interesting; the music is clearly scored and beautifully reproduced.

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MISS MILDRED HATCHER, our new Vice-president, has published in the Southern Folklore Quarterly, XXI, 2, the paper on "Folklore of Our Early Schools," which she read at the 1956 Annual Meeting of our Society. In the same journal, Archer Taylor presents a collection of proverbial materials combed from a novel by Tobias Smollett.

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THE DEATH OF SIMEON T. WEBB, Casey Jones' fireman on the famous "Cannonball Express" that was wrecked near Vaughn, Mississippi, on April 30, 1900, should not go unnoticed in the pages of the Bulletin. Webb died of cancer in a Memphis hospital on July 13 of this year.

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LEONARD ROBERTS presents another folktale collected in Kentucky in Mountain Life and Work, XXXII, 3. It is one he calls "The Hanted House," a ghost story he says he has found in twenty-five or thirty variants. He identifies it as Type 326, The Youth Went Forth.

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THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the International Folk Music Council will be held at Liege, Belgium, July 28 to August 2, 1958. The main theme of the Conference will be "Tradition in Folk Music: Its Stability and Its Evolution in Changing Social Conditions." Registration blanks may be obtained from the Secretary of the Council, 12 Clorane Gardens, London, N. W. 3.

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THE NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE SOCIETY will hold its forty-sixth annual meeting at the Sir Walter Hotel, Raleigh, on December 6. The theme of the program will be "Our Anglo-American Heritage of Story, Song, and Dance."

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BORDEN DEAL, Box 6145, University, Alabama, is interested in receiving information about various types of the "Tic-Tac," which he recalls as having been used in his youth to make "a horrible frightening sound" at Halloween and on the occasions of shivarees. From his uncle in North Mississippi he has descriptions of two similar instruments:

The first, a "Dumbo" is made by stretching a piece of rawhide over a hollow object such as a tin can. Then you pierce a small hole in the rawhide and tie another piece of rawhide through the hold. This in turn, is tied to a string (which can be long enough for safety) and the string fastened to a nail on the side of a house. Then you put your hand inside the can, and rub the rawhide with your fingers. The sound is transmitted to the house through the taut string.

The Tic-Tac is somewhat similar. A tin can has a hole punched in one end. Then a piece of rosined string is tied through the hold, then extended a safe distance to the house and fastened to a nail. Then one rubs the rosined string. The Dumbo produces a low, hollow booming, while the Tic-Tac is shriller. I have never read anything about these two "frighteners" in any folklore publication.

Mr. Deal comments, "Perhaps there are other forms of these gadgets, as well as other names for them, that your readers may know."

It is of interest to note that Mr. Deal's new book, Dunbar's Cove, is concerned with the impact of the TVA on the people of North Alabama. It is the January selection of the Reader's Digest Book Club.

James N. Tidwell, ed., A Treasury of American Folk Humor. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1956. xx+ 620 pp. \$5.00.

It may not be proper to say so, but this book is funny. Purists may debate the merits of differentiating humor from the mainstream of American folklore, but if they are only "half-normal," they will laugh through this anthology with little effort.

Many people have decried the demise of traditional American humor. Pat and Mike jokes aren't told as frequently as they were a few years ago. Dialect stories and anecdotes involving almost any minority, Negroes, Jews, Irishmen, Italians, Southerners, Brooklynites, have become almost "smutty" to a righteous, anti-prejudice element of our population. Poking fun at themselves, at others, and at respectable institutions was the choice white meat of the popularity of Mark Twain, Mr. Dooley, Will Rogers, and Damon Runyan. The hush of Orwellian fantasy assumes reality as references to race, class, religion, place of birth, and residence are increasingly omitted from humor. The mass media of television, radio, and movies reflect this observation most apparently. Yet, even comic strips and editorial pages are rapidly adjusting themselves to this American version of Newspeak.

Thus, to some people, A Treasury of American Folk Humor may be dated, interesting only to antiquarians. Such pessimism fails to consider the great mass of plain folk in this country. Their fun includes, but is not defined by, the humor of the New Yorker or that about sex, their apparent preoccupation with the Misses Monroe, Lollabrigida, and Universe of 1957 notwithstanding. They laugh at, seldom with, the sterile patter of professional comics who pass in endless parade through network channels.

Mr. Tidwell's anthology is a selective sampling of what has made Americans laugh down through the years and which is still funny in this Atomic Age, year 12. Cleaned from the wealth of American folklore, these selections are packed with solid fun and sparkling wit. An admirable feature of the collection is that some of the most oft-printed humorous pieces of American literature, such as Mark Twain's jumping frog story, are omitted. Among the many American humorists represented in this volume are Davy Crockett, Sut Lovingood, Don Marquis, Josh Billings, Finley Peter Dunne, A. B. Longstreet, H. L. Mencken, Mark Twain, Bill Nye, Petroleum V. Nasby, Robert Benchley, and Will Rogers. There are Hadacol stories, rhymes of childhood, Wellerisms, Little Moron jokes, and stories of snipe-hunts and left-handed monkey wrenches. This is a veritable banquet of humor from appetizer to after-dinner coffee.

Current American humor may be lacking some of the salt of former times, but there is enough seasoning in this anthology to remedy almost any dietary deficiency. This book should be nearby like a filled cookie jar, available for its contents to be enjoyed at will.

--O. L. Davis, Jr.

Demonstration School, George Peabody  
College for Teachers



Gordon Hall Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957. First published 1932. \$2.95.

In its comprehensiveness and sanity, this is probably still the best single book in English on the traditional ballad.

Few scholarly controversies have raged more hotly than that a generation ago about the origin of ballads, between the (Harvard) communalists spearheaded by Professor Gummere and the individual authorshippers led by Professor Louise Pound. Into this hassel the present volume descended like a breath of fresh air. Professor Gerould made the problem of origins seem unimportant alongside the much more available problem of transmission.

Exceptional values of The Ballad of Tradition include the following: (1) Definition of ballad, pp. 4ff. It is instructive to observe now indebted subsequent scholars have been to Gerould's clear statement of the three constants and the two or three accompanying characteristics of ballads. (2) Identification of "incremental repetition" as a rhetorical, not a structural device (pp. 93, 105). (3) Fin-pointing of relatively unknown highlights in the historical development of ballad characteristics and appreciation: Bede's contribution (pp. 194, 221), that of Addison (p. 250), and that of Gray (p. 252) among others. (4) Clear-sighted recognition of the lateness of balladry (pp. 12, 161): "Ballads are very far from being primitive poetry, indeed; they are rather the flower of an art formalized and developed among people whose training has been oral instead of visual." And (5) insistence on the importance of music, for example, to determine stanza form of a ballad (p. 125).

In very few respects have later investigations or the passage of time since 1932 proved Gerould wrong. He made a bit too much of the lack of education of the ballad-makers: "Unlettered the makers have been, simple of mind and heart" (p. 12; cf. p. 135). But many a ballad was probably originally created by a cultured, learned, poetically competent member of the upper classes. And as a child of his day the author over-emphasized the likelihood of quick extinction of folksinging: "...no doubt the mountaineers, the maritime folk, and the Negroes of the United States and Canada will forget their ballad-singing ere long" (p. 171). But it is still (1957) not a "lost art."

Further, Professor Gerould's signal service to ballad music is not without its flaws. (1) His ill-chosen variant of "Barbara Allan" (p. 125) certainly does not indicate that the common ballad stanza is "quite certainly a couplet with seven stresses to the line." In the first place, in stanzas of "Barbara Allan" the second and fourth lines prosodically end atypically feminine, not masculine; in the second, the particular tune cited has the unusual musical structure AA. (2) It is not clear (p. 129) why the signature 6/4 should not be used "when the music... is in 3/4 time" and "the primary stress... comes at the beginning of one measure and the secondary stress at the beginning of the next measure." But these objections are quibbles. Dazzling is the word for some of his poetic insights, such as that in the first paragraph on p. 129.

The 311 pages of this reprint of The Ballad of Tradition are well executed, containing only two or three obvious typographical mistakes and one misspelled word. An appendix prints some American ballad texts; the bibliography includes post- or extra-Child references through 1931. Professor Gerould refers to some 289 ballads but incorporates only one tune, which last fact renders it difficult to see why the present paperback should cost \$2.95. Even so, all scholars of the ballad in the English language are indebted to the Oxford University Press for once again making available this excellent book.

--George W. Boswell  
Austin Peay State College

Horace P. Beck, The Folklore of Maine. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1957." \$5.00.

In the trodution to the book he has written about The Folklore of Maine, Mr. Beck gives the prospective reader fair warning that he has not intended to be scholarly. He points out that an exhaustive study of his subject would have been unmanageable within the covers of one volume. He has therefore limited his material to a "selection of tales, beliefs, superstitions, songs, and customs of people of English-speaking stock in Maine." Further, he confesses that the selection has often been made on a quite subjective basis. An indication of his method is to be seen in his statement that most of the stories he tells "have been paraphrased to make for easier reading." He includes tunes of few of the folksongs he records, but claims that those given "adequately represent the Maine singing techniques."

The first chapter of the book deals with place names in the State and the facts and legends that account for them. Mr. Beck then draws at length on the adventures, observations and exaggerations of old John Josselyn, "Maine's first folklorist." Other chapters are entitled, "The Towns, the Islands and the Sea," "Shore Lore," "The Islands," "Legends," "The Sea," and "Lumbering." The arrangement indicates accurately enough that the chief interest is in conveying a picture of the State on the level of its folk life. The result is an informative and charming portrayal; the book has the advantage of a kind of coherence not always found in the literature of folklore. It should also be said, of course, that the method adopted makes difficult its use as a reference book, even though it is supplied with an index.

Naturally, Mr. Beck liberally documents the effects of the sea on the folk life of Maine. Many of the anecdotes and legends here recorded relate to ship building, voyaging, whaling, and life on isolated islands and on the coast. The comparative isolation of Maine from the rest of the continent has also been a major factor in the culture of the State, which the author describes as having an "insular quality." He points out, in contradiction of the notion that the inhabitants of the State "are individualists, each going his own dour way," that the "Mainite is a conformist" who quite consistently shares with his fellows a narrowly restricted set of folk beliefs. Mr. Beck finds such insularity also in the survivals of old songs that have been handed down from generation to generation without much change. Yet he illustrates fully enough that adaptations have

developed there, as elsewhere. One of the interesting examples is a comic version of "Springfield Mountain" which makes the unfortunate victim of the "serpint" a "nice young man" who was "Davy Crockett's only son."

Readers who wish to explore further the material touched on in this book will appreciate both the "partial bibliography" supplied by the author and his detailed acknowledgment of the sources on which he drew.

--W. J. G.

Mody C. Boatright, Wilson M. Hudson, Allen Maxwell, eds., Mesquite and Willow.  
Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1957. \$4.00.

The mesquite and willow, both types of trees growing in Texas, are chosen by the editors to symbolize the dichotomy of folklore in this state and in this volume, the twenty-seventh annual collection issued by the Texas Folklore Society. Mesquite represents the Mexican (a mixture of Spanish and Indian elements), while willow represents the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The title is an appropriate and poetic one that suggests the mixed culture of the state, and most of the articles fit the pattern.

Seven articles concern Mexican lore. The first selection is "The Legend of Gregorio Cortez," a Mexican Robin Hood who was fond of killing sheriffs on the border. Americo Paredes tells the tale with humor. ("Now there are three saints that the Americans are especially fond of--Santa Anna, San Jacinto, and Sanavabiche--and of the three it is Sanavabiche that they pray to most.") Riley Aiken tells "Six Tales from Mexico"; the best include one about a man that likes people "who make a noise when they walk and sense when they talk" and two about parrots who, like some people, "saw too much, heard too much, and talked too much." One, "La Cenicienta Huasteca," is a weak version of Cinderella. J. Frank Dobie, the dean of Texas folklorists, recounts "Br'er Rabbit Watches Out for Himself in Mexico," but unlike the Cinderella story, this derivative has some subtle, unique twists to it. Editor Hudson's scholarly contribution, "The Twelve Truths in the Spanish Southwest," is a study of Latin-American religious folklore. There is probably more fascinating material in this field waiting for an objective collector such as Hudson. John W. Hendren, a ballad scholar, contributes "To Whom God Wishes to Give: A Tale of Old Mexico in English Ballad Stanzas." Elton R. Miles, in "Christ in the Big Ben," shows that to the Texas Border Mexican, the day of miracles is not done; for the poor church at Ojinaga, Christ appears in person and becomes an image. The legends "attribute power and personality to the image." In the Big Bend, "Christ is the deity of rain and productivity, while the devil is the evil power of drought-god traditions." The last of the "Mesquite" section, Alfredo R. Garcia's "Spanish Folklore from South Texas," is a tale of the mal de ojo, the evil eye, believed to be "the power by which Nature endows some people whereby they can cause others to become sick." Garcia gives some remedies for this illness, and tells of the wisdom of visiting la rifeira, the fortune teller.



Seven other articles concern Anglo-Saxon Lore: "The Child Ballad in the Middle West and Lower Mississippi Valley," by Brownie McNeil; "The Western Bad Man as Here," by Mody C. Boatright; "Animal Tails: Function and Folklore," by Roy Bedickek; "Dialogue in Folktale and Song," by R. C. Stephenson; "Tales of the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railroad," by Victor J. Smith; "The Ghost of the Hutto Ranch," by John Z. Anderson; and "Home Remedies for Arthritis," by Walter Taylor. Editor Boatright, in the most interesting article of the book, discusses the "outlaw hero" between the time of the Civil War and 1900. This tradition which elevated some "notorious desperadoes of the Southwest to the status of folk heroes" required, Boatright thinks, "a culture pre-eminently dependent upon the horse." The perceptive study points out the requirements for the bad-man hero: he must belong to the dominant Anglo-American majority, come from a respectable but not wealthy family, have an unfortunate childhood, commit his first crime under extreme provocation, fight the enemies of the people, perform acts of tenderness and generosity, and, of course, atone for his misdeeds. Dr. Bedickek, internationally known naturalist, achieves a fine combination of science and art (of writing) in his enlightening, humorous essay. Smith entertains the reader with "stories, anecdotes, and railroad gossip the nature of which is amusing, ridiculous, and sometimes fantastic," always with the "flavor of West Texas" where the brakeman warns "Choose your partners for the tunnel." Anderson tells a mild, documented ghost story, while Taylor has assembled an amazing hodgepodge of remedies for an age-old disease. McNeil and Stephenson, in technical, dissertation-type studies, go beyond the limits suggested by the title of the book.

In addition, this collection contains Stith Thompson's "Recollections of an Itinerant Folklorist," an address to the Texas Folklore Society, 1956. Founder of a graduate school of Folklore at Indiana University and author of the internationally noted Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, Thompson tells of his experiences in folklore of the world since his founding of the Texas Folklore publication in 1916, including recent work with UNESCO as Vice-president of the International Commission for Folklore and Folk Arts.

This volume is a valuable addition to the Texas Folklore Series. Some sixteen of the preceding volumes are still in print. Like them, Mesquite and Willow is as "rich and varied as Texas itself," and that dust jacket statement (quite true) says a lot.

--James W. Byrd  
East Texas State College  
Commerce, Texas



A Sampler of Louisiana Folksongs, sung by traditional performers. Collected and ed. by Harry Oster. Baton Rouge: Louisiana Folklore Society, 1957. 12" LP. \$5.95.

The disc recording Louisiana folksongs that has recently been issued by the Louisiana Folklore Society is a genuine document that should be cherished by collectors and students of American folk music. It represents the Americanized Negro, Negro French, Cajun, Creole French, and Anglo-Saxon traditions. It records twenty items, every one of which has its particular interest.

The recordings are not all technically excellent; some of them are muffled, while others are more folksy than musical. It must be remembered, however, that this disc was not intended to make a bid for commercial success.

Both the disc itself and the transcription of the songs should have an interest to students of language as well as students of folk music. What has happened to the French language in Louisiana is weird and wonderful. The pamphlet accompanying the disc also supplies useful editorial notes relating to the provenance and history of some of the songs.

The types of songs here collected range from Negro religious songs through Negro "blues," the Cajun drinking song, Creole romantic ballads, a version of "The Derby Ram," a variant of "The House Carpenter," to play-party songs such as "Weevily Wheat." Space does not allow a full description of the variety and virtues of the collection. It deserves such a description, but the most appropriate remark to be made is, "Buy the record."

--W. J. G.

# TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY BULLETIN

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President, George C. Grise, Austin Peay State College, Clarksville, Tennessee  
Vice-president, Irene Bewley, Greeneville, Tennessee  
Treasurer, William W. Bass, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.  
Secretary-Editor, William J. Griffin, George Peabody College for Teachers,  
Nashville, Tennessee

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